

Another Anniversary to Celebrate— For 10 Years I've Maintained & Still Today!

It's been ten years since my story started, but **I maintain it still today**. In 1996 I weighed 250 pounds and I'm only 5'3" tall. I couldn't walk up more than six steps without having to stop and catch my breath; I could feel my heart pounding in my chest. It would take at least a full minute to recover so that I could make it up the last six steps of my townhouse. I used to have to spread my legs like a giraffe and take a deep breath just so I could bend over to quickly pull a few weeds in my flower garden.

I finally decided that I needed to take some serious steps to better my life and health before I didn't have a life to better. I began doing a little "dance" routine in my living room each morning to a little-known Country Rock group called "The Tractors" whose music was perfectly timed for aerobic exercise. As my heart and lungs got used to the 20 minute exercise I was able to make myself a small step about 1.5 inches high and moved up to that; in a few weeks I was up to a 3 and 4 and finally a 6 inch box.

I HATE to exercise, but I could no longer ignore the fact that it wasn't something I had to do until I lost the weight (I'd been yo-yo-ing all my life), but something I would have to do for the rest of my life. After a couple of months the scale began to budge, slowly but surely. I was in a bad marriage at this time also and during this time it finally fell apart and my husband moved out. The amazing thing was that as soon as the stress of that relationship was gone, the weight began to melt off even faster, and I was losing ten pounds a month regularly **until I reached my goal weight of 125 pounds**. I have regained only about 10 pounds and continue to exercise aerobically and light strength training (hand-held weights and isometrics) every other day. I take Friday evenings off to relax and reward myself and avoid burnout. (I do not belong to a gym.)

Submitted by Rebecca Mauler, Michigan Department of Human Services